

BIOSECURITY INFORMATION FOR KEEPERS OF POULTRY

This information was obtained from APHIS- the Animal and Plant Inspection Service. For more information and their checklists please refer to <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>

The APHIS checklists offer a general guide to practicing good biosecurity. They do suggest that if you have a site-specific biosecurity plan, that you should, please follow it. Commercial growers should be sure their site-specific plans follow the National Poultry Improvement Plan biosecurity principles.

- Wash your hands before and after coming in contact with live poultry. In addition to potentially spreading disease from farm to farm you can also spread germs such as *Salmonella* that can impact human health.
- Understand what poses a disease risk: it's not just the wild birds and pests themselves.
- Feathers, nests, feces, and other organic materials can also carry disease. These items can come in contact with your flock through poultry enclosures, feed and water supplies, and even vehicles at your property.
- Check coops, pens, and poultry houses regularly for areas that allow birds to perch, nest, or enter. These include extended roof eaves, rooftop ventilation, overhead wires, torn screens, holes, and broken door openings.
- Concrete aprons around building walls deter burrowing animals.
- Sweep away old nests before nesting season—birds will return to the same nests year after year.
- Clean and disinfect poultry enclosures. This includes removing soiled litter and throwing it away. Sick birds can easily contaminate straw and other bedding.

Know the warning signs of poultry disease, like changes in how much your birds eat or drink, increased deaths in your flock, or general malaise. Please look at the pictures of healthy and unhealthy poultry on the APHIS website.

- **Keep visitors to a minimum.** Only allow those people who take care of your poultry to come in contact with your birds, this includes family and friends. Keep track of everyone who is on your property at all times. Make sure everyone who has contact with your flock follows biosecurity principles.
- Always ask visitors if they've been in contact with wild birds or pet birds or if they have their own poultry. If so, they should not go near your flock. Some avian disease agents can survive in a person's nose, without actually infecting the person, for 2 days.
- Clean and disinfect equipment to remove feces, feathers, and litter. Disease agents can survive for months inside these organic materials, so make sure nothing is tracked into or out of poultry houses or pens.
- Do not share tools, poultry supplies, or lawn and garden equipment with other flock owners or neighbors. If you must, be sure to clean and disinfect the items before they reach your property and before returning them.

- Use personal protective equipment like washable footwear or shoe covers, gloves, coveralls, and hair coverings when handling birds. These items should be worn only while caring for your poultry—never elsewhere— and be changed between bird enclosures to prevent disease spread. Give visitors and family members personal protective equipment to wear when they are in contact with your birds.
- Don't give wild birds, rodents, and insects a free lunch! Remove spilled or uneaten feed right away, and make sure feed storage units are secure and free of holes.
- Protect your flock's water supply. Make sure wild birds, rodents, and other pests can't access it. And if you can, use a municipal water supply or treated well water so you know it's clean
- **Report sick birds.** Don't wait. If your birds are sick or dying, call a local veterinarian, cooperative extensive service, or state veterinarian. Call USDA toll-free at **1-866-536-7593**.

ARE YOU PURCHASING NEW BIRDS THIS SPRING?

- Starting out with healthy poultry is the best way to keep flocks safe from disease. That means buying your poultry from sources that participate in the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP, www.poultryimprovement.org).
- Keep new birds separate from the rest of the flock for 30 days to minimize disease
- Always practice good biosecurity to ensure that your flocks remain healthy and free of disease. If you see or suspect anything unusual, call your flock supervisor, veterinarian, or cooperative extension office right away. Use this form to record phone numbers for contacts in your area.

Please refer to MDAR's [Poultry Program | Mass.gov](#)